

# A VIEW WITH A ROOM

*London's interior design world is undergoing a revolution, like that of the Eighties when Sotheby's and Christie's started marketing their fine furniture and picture catalogues directly to HNW clients in an attempt to undercut dealers.*

*Annabel Astor is leading the way with her elegant, quirky, eclectic and ever more English-looking furniture and designer collections for OKA (watch out, Soane), which is now a global interior design phenomenon.*

*But wealthy clients are increasingly doing more for their homes by themselves. That is why the likes of Nicky Haslam is designing for OKA and Nina Campbell does furniture for And So To Bed.*

*However, for those who are still shy about the 'designer high street', here is our guide to the top designers whose chic and discerning tastes will make your house look like nobody else's show home but your own.*

*By William Cash*



## Geraldine Apponyi

Apponyi is known for a bespoke approach. At her small practice with its growing reputation, clients get plenty of personal attention. Geraldine works closely with her mother, Monika, who trained at the Inchbald, across Europe, from farmhouses in Austria to Notting Hill mansions. The pair are known for the quality of their detailing. 'I strongly believe that a home should reflect the tastes, personalities and interests of the people living in it or experiencing it,' says Geraldine.

[apponyi.co.uk](http://apponyi.co.uk)



## Nikki Atkinson

Nikki is a top choice for bankers, hedgies and international types (including jewellery house heiresses) who want classical and immaculate English interiors with a contemporary twist. Nikki lives between Oxfordshire and London so is also well placed for the country houses which often feature in glossy mags.

[nikkiatkinson.co.uk](http://nikkiatkinson.co.uk)



## Vivien Greenock

Trained at Colefax and Fowler in Mayfair and now operating from the Pimlico Road above Soane, Vivien is one of London's chicest and most discreet designers with clients that include Oscar de la Renta, John Fairchild, one of the grandest London clubs and several stately homes. Her bathrooms are famous for being magical and sumptuous Edwardian affairs – with polished nickel fittings, red leather club armchairs, flocked wallpaper and mahogany loo seats.

[viviengreenock.co.uk](http://viviengreenock.co.uk)



## Rabih Hage

Rabih Hage is a previous winner of the Andrew Martin Interior Designer of the Year award and is known for his ultra-modern, distinctively sleek designs. He has been called the 'architects' designer' and brings a classical lyricism to his projects, which include townhouses in New York and London, as well as designing his own collection for DuPont Corian for the Milan Furniture Fair. Before setting up on Sloane Avenue, he trained in Paris, studying architecture and contemporary design.

[rabih-hage.com](http://rabih-hage.com)





## Tara Bernerd

Tara Bernerd is known for her contemporary designs and works with a team of ten at her Belgravia offices. Her projects have included the drawing room for Aspinall's casino and the Belgraves hotel in Belgravia. Her style is often ultra-sharp, bold and modern with a project including an apartment in the Trump Tower, New York. Known as an 'edgy' designer with a taste for high glamour she may not be right for somebody wanting a traditional or classical look.

[tarabernerd.com](http://tarabernerd.com)



## Edward Bulmer

Edward Bulmer has an architectural and academic background and trained with superstar designer David Mlinaric on various high profile projects including Spencer House. He was chosen to redecorate the Coffee Room at White's on St James's and worked on the repainting of the Adam Library at newly restored Kenwood House. His speciality is not a funky or avant-garde loft space — rather he's for anybody who wants to reinvent a stately interior or grand country house.

[edwardbulmer.co.uk](http://edwardbulmer.co.uk)



## Chelsea Decorators

Caroline Lawson now works with Louise Acton, Inchbald trained and a rising star of the interior world (right). Caroline herself trained with Diana Hanbury and is known for her impeccable redecoration of classical London houses as one of the masters of the English interior. Louise brings new energy and a more contemporary edge to a small but highly regarded firm that is not sniffy about taking on less grand projects or less expensive budgets. 'We have our own sofa workshops and upholsterers based in the country so we give clients the best English workmanship for the best price,' says Louise.

[chelseadecorators.com](http://chelseadecorators.com)



## Nicky Haslam

Nicky is still going strong, while also designing collections for OKA, writing books and lunching with Spear's. His team includes Beata Heuman, one of his star protégés. His book about his miniature country house (above), Nicky Haslam's Folly de Grandeur, is not just a beautiful object for a coffee table: it is a homage to the idea of reinvention — something Nicky has specialised in. His book reveals the emotional bond that the English have with the aesthetic of their homes. Certainly not the cheapest, Nicky is an A-list decorator for A-list clients.

[nh-design.co.uk](http://nh-design.co.uk)



## OKA

Today everybody thinks they can be their own decorator and there is no shame in doing up your new Gstaad chalet or St Tropez beach villa with more than just a little help from the shop of Annabel Astor, mother of Samantha Cameron, wife of the prime minister. OKA also has its own interior design department headed by Julie Paul, whose team can help HNWs choose furniture and fabrics to blend in with what they already have — as opposed to insisting (like many decorators do) that clients call the removal vans and dump the old furniture at Lots Road auction house.

[oka-direct.com](http://oka-direct.com)



## Diana Sieff

Diana Sieff isn't the sort of designer who imposes grand ideas on your house or demands you have fabrics custom-flocked by George Spencer. She has a super-chic eye, a friendly manner and a very small team who work from offices close to the Pimlico Road. Her introduction to the interior design business came seventeen years ago after a friend asked her who had decorated her house and she said, 'I did'. The friend hired her and she has not looked back.

[sieff.co.uk](http://sieff.co.uk)

## Henrietta Spencer-Churchill

Daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, Henrietta is known for her classical eye and was chosen by Leon Max for his superb renovation of Easton Neston (built by Hawksmoor, who worked on Blenheim Palace). Despite her grand pedigree, Henrietta is very down to earth, practical and hands-on as a designer. She is just as happy to do a medieval barn conversion as a Barbados beach villa. She is a world authority on the history of country houses.

[spencerchurchilldesigns.com](http://spencerchurchilldesigns.com)